

174
[THIRD EDITION.]

THOUGHTS

ON A

FRENCH INVASION, &c.

[ONE SHILLING.]

THIRD EDITION

THOUGHTS

FRENCH INVASION

[ONE SHILLING]

THOUGHTS
ON A
FRENCH INVASION,
WITH REFERENCE TO THE
PROBABILITY OF ITS SUCCESS,
AND THE PROPER
MEANS OF RESISTING IT.

BY
HAVILLAND LE MESURIER, Esq. *K*
COMMISSARY GENERAL FOR THE SOUTHERN
DISTRICT OF ENGLAND.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON :
PRINTED FOR J. WRIGHT, OPPOSITE OLD BOND-
STREET, PICCADILLY.
1798.

423

THOUGHTS
OF
FRENCH INVASION,
WITH REFERENCE TO THE
PROBABILITY OF ITS SUCCESS
AND THE PEOPLE
MEANS OF RESISTING IT.

46
1/8
404.
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY
GENERAL FOR THE SOUTH
DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS
THIRD EDITION



THOUGHTS, &c.

THE menace of a French Invasion, which formerly afforded a subject for ridicule, cannot now be treated in so light a manner. For some time, indeed, the French have rested their hopes in the accumulation of our national debt, and loudly declared we should ultimately fall under the weight of our finances; they have affected to call us a nation of brokers, and compared the people of England to the inhabitants of Holland, who have sacrificed their very existence as a nation, to the most sordid and the most mistaken notions of self-preservation.

In these hopes they trust no longer; they groan under the weight of our naval and colonial successes; they see the vast increase of the commerce of this nation, and

they cannot but attribute it in a great degree to the very means they make use of for their aggrandizement: they themselves are obliged to purchase here the luxuries and many of the necessaries of life; the wealth they have obtained by rapine, flows to this country by the channels of trade, and France contributes by the drains of its specie to the prevention of the catastrophe held out by its rulers as inevitable.

Convinced, at length, that England can never want money whilst carrying on the commerce of the world, France now resolves to make a grand attempt. The Directory, the Legislators, and the Generals, of that country make no secret of their intentions.* Whenever they have meditated the ruin of a country and the destruction

* Decree of the Executive Directory on the 26th of October, 1797.

“ The Executive Directory decrees what follows:

“ Art. 1. There shall be assembled without delay on the coasts of the ocean, an army which shall be called the Army of England.

of its government, they have previously declared it. They announced their march to Holland, to Spain, to Italy, to Germany. Their policy is to terrify governments with threats, and to prepare beforehand the disaffected of every country for a change. They have already experienced the effect which may be produced by this exaggerated representation of their power; and they have seen more than one example of the dismay, which menaces apparently extravagant have struck into their opponents, while in the same proportion the exertions of their soldiers have been increased by the opinion which has been inculcated into them, that nothing can resist their armies.

The General who conquered Italy, is named to command the Army of England,

" 2. Citizen General Bounaparte is named Commander in Chief of that army.

" Revelliere Lepaux, Pres.

" Lagarde, Sec. Gen."

and has accepted the trust.* Preparations of an uncommon kind are on foot, new inventions are framing, and the whole power, ingenuity, and wealth of France and its dependants are set on the chance of an Invasion.

To these machinations the government of this country is no stranger; the extent of the danger they can ascertain, the naval and military defence is in the best hands, and the honest mechanic, farmer, and tradesman may pursue his habits of industry, without any reasonable ground for appre-

* "Go, Citizen-General, to crown so glorious a life by a conquest which the Great Nation owes to its insulted dignity; go and punish, in London, outrages which have been too long unpunished."

Speech of President Barras to General Buonaparte,

21st Nov. 1797.

"It seems decreed that the French Republic shall only make peace with their enemies at their own capitals—send to England those columns which have made victory the companion of their banners."

Address of the Merchants to the Executive Directory.

hending, either that his labours should be interrupted, or his property taken from him.

But since the danger, either real or apparent, may suddenly burst upon an unprotected part of this island, as its happy inhabitants know not how to ascertain the risk they run under an invasion; they may derive instruction from, being made acquainted with the progress of the enemy in other countries, and apprized by what human means the fall of so many independent and powerful states was effected. They will be cheered at the view of some striking differences between those states and us, and it will prevent alarm, misrepresentation, and dismay, to shew every individual in this country what ought to be his immediate object, during the confusion inseparable from an attack.

The Writer begs to be understood as not addressing himself to those, who have made the profession of arms their study,

or to those who are associated and embodied under established officers: his wish is to give practical hints to the plain man, who has never seen any military service.

It may not be known to the generality of Englishmen, that when the French invaded the different countries of Europe, they calculated on suffering no impediment from their inhabitants, who were as quietly ploughing their land, opening and shutting their shops, and carrying on their traffic during the time of invasion, as if no enemy had been at their gates. The French therefore only inquired what number of regular troops were opposed to them; while these, although obliged to refrain from any coercive measure, or any kind of requisition, for fear of offending their own commanding officers, ever considered the inhabitants they were defending more as their enemies than their friends. Thus, the more populous the country, the greater resource (instead of the greater opposition) the enemy found in it:

and his first measure was to put in requisition* every article he wanted. By means of this system of requisition, those persons who had sheltered themselves under the mask of neutrality, while the Combined Armies protected them, aided and assisted the French on their arrival, in the warm hope of purchasing by treachery an exemption from the general pillage.

As the enemy advanced they recruited their army with the disaffected, and raised

* As an Englishman may not be acquainted with the full meaning of the word *requisition*, it may not be superfluous to acquaint him, that a French commissary on his arrival at a town, or in a district, gets possession of the magistrates and principal persons in it, whom he obliges, on pain of being instantly hanged, to discover every kind of property belonging to them or others, every resource the country can afford, and the speediest mode of being put in possession of it. These are declared to be in a state of requisition, for the use of the Republic ; and, as a security that nothing may escape, the commissioners have always a set of rascally informers in reserve, on whose evidence, or charge of prevarication, the magistrates, or principal persons, are liable to be sacrificed.

contributions upon the rich, increasing their numbers, both from the love of plunder, and the motive of fear; but not one generous, one patriotic struggle against them has been made on the Continent by any one people or state; not one government has ventured to levy its subjects in a mass, or even to organize a system of defence in which the people had a share.

France poured forth her hundreds of thousands on a disunited coalition. While these were pressing in the front, the discontented, the dissolute, the demagogues, the atheists, the illuminati, were in the bosom of the country, magnifying their numbers, extolling their successes, and foretelling their near approach. But with all this, in how many instances did these boasted conquerors succeed, except by numbers? Not only assisted by partizans in every country they invaded, they always had regular armies, twice or thrice the number of those they fought with. Possessing unity of action, they had to contend with allies who

pursued separate interests, who were more jealous of each other than careful to oppose the enemy, and each of whom, as the French truly asserted at the time, considered the misfortune of the other as advantages to himself. Under such circumstances it cannot be matter of surprise, that the operations of the Continental Powers should have been weak and ill concerted, and the event of them disastrous. They have met the ample punishment of their short-sighted selfishness. But amidst the gloom which these reflections spread, a cheering light is derived from recollecting the brilliant manner in which the British troops have never failed to distinguish themselves, whenever an opportunity offered of manifesting the superiority of their valour. Let those who extol the gallantry of our fleets, not with a view to display the glory they have so justly acquired, but for the sake of blasting the laurels gained by their countrymen by land, let these men, whether in the pay of France, or only acting from their own vile imagina-

tions, say, where was the boasted courage of the enemy at Lincelles, when eleven hundred British Guards stormed a formidable work, defended by six times their number, completely routed the enemy, and made themselves masters of the whole of his artillery? Where, in the action near Cateau, when eighteen hundred British cavalry defeated their army of five-and-twenty thousand men, pursued them to the gates of Cambray, took their general prisoner, and upwards of fifty pieces of cannon? Where, at the battle of Tournay, when a small British brigade, under the command of General Fox, drove back General Pichegru's left wing, and decided the victory, till that moment doubtful? Where, at the sortie from Nimeguen, when six British battalions marched out in the middle of the day, threw themselves, without firing a shot, into the enemy's trenches, dispersed the troops that guarded them, and, after being in possession of them two hours, and completely destroying the works, returned

in perfect order to the town, without the enemy daring to harass them? Where, at the capture of Martinique, and before the little army of Sir Charles Gray? Where, in the East Indies, when the enemy was stripped of every foot of land they held there? Strange and fatal delusion! that in England men should be found to magnify the courage of our enemies, and depreciate our own at the expence of truth.

Having touched upon the advantages the French derived in their progress on the Continent from the people of the country, and leaving the full consideration of the subject to abler pens, it is material to recollect, that the French art of war is calculated upon the reception which their troops have hitherto met with: aware of this, their rulers have given out that the English are a venal people,* incapable of

* See the Message of the 4th Jan. prohibiting English manufactures :

“ An enemy, who always fly, when closely pressed ;
“ who are a handful of pirates.”

great exertions, dissatisfied with their government, * and divided among themselves. †

It is a fact, (however incredible to an English ear) that they are taught to believe, that a division of twenty thousand men, once landed, is quite adequate to the conquest of this country; for they calculate that, having once a footing in the island, such an army might advance where it pleased, and could easily be reinforced.

That twenty thousand men are not easily transported in the face of a superior navy, is admitted; but without having recourse to balloons, to diving-bells, or even

* Address of the French merchants to the Directory.

“ Thus let the Army of England go and dictate terms
“ of peace in London. And there, Republicans, you
“ will also have auxiliaries. † There you will also find
“ those thousands of generous men, who have struggled
“ for a long time past with the view of obtaining a Par-
“ liamentary Reform.”

Proclamation of the Directory, 21st Nov. 1797.

o monstrous rafts, such a number may perhaps be risked in boats or small vessels, if, as we most incontrovertibly know to be the case, their lives weigh but as a feather in the estimation of their rulers.

Supposing then, a column or division should escape our ships on passage, and not be destroyed by the naval power on the coast before they could land;—it is incumbent on every man in England to consider before hand, what would be the consequence of their landing.

Wherever the landing may be effected, officers will no doubt be found who will give the best directions to the military force; but if individuals remain inactive at the spot, or if in their haste to escape, they impede the military operations, they will in both cases assist the views of the enemy.

Before our armies are assembled, the first object with every man must be the driving away the cattle, the securing the horses, the carrying off the provisions of

every kind for man and beast. If this be done, it is impossible the enemy can advance ; nothing will be left him but to return to the sea from whence he came.

The women, the old men, the sick, and the helpless children, are to be taken care of ; and every individual will no doubt assist in procuring them an asylum ; but as to property of any kind, except provisions, it would impede every plan of attack or defence to pay attention to it.

Let any one reflect on the astonishment of the enemy, if, on entering a town or village, he found no living thing, nor any food in it.—He would stand appalled, and feel conquered from that moment !

So far from setting fire to the place, or plundering the valuables left there, he would dread being called to account for the mischief ; and in so new and unprecedented a situation, would strive to purchase his pardon by forbearance.

It may not be obvious to every one, that an army cannot advance to any distance

without horses. For twenty thousand men (with any degree of artillery, ammunition, cavalry, and waggons) six thousand horses, at least, are requisite; and it is well known that the strength of the French army consists in its artillery, which cannot be moved without horses. The cannon, the horses, and the waggons, are not so easily waisted over the sea as the men; if, therefore, the people of the country will drive away their horses and waggons, the total deprivation of the enemy's means will be superadded to the horrors of their solitude.

Much more care and attention may be required in order to drive away the cattle and carry off the provisions, without injury to the old men, infirm women and children, than at first sight may be supposed. The roads leading to the enemy must be kept as clear as possible, so as to enable the armed force to advance upon them; and as every care will be taken to indemnify all those who may suffer in their property through their exertions for the common

cause, some intelligent person should accompany every drove of cattle, every convoy of provisions, every detachment of helpless persons; such a man might depend on being noticed and rewarded in proportion to the care and judgment he may display; as officers will be specially charged with taking account of, and reporting upon the provisions and property, thus prevented from affording sustenance to our invaders.

If, instead of retiring before the enemy, the inhabitants of towns and villages should remain, they must be aware that *all* their property, their dear property, for which they had sacrificed their honour, their conscience, and their religion, would be put in requisition,* their women would be com-

* See, in a preceding note, what French requisition was on the Continent, and judge what it would be here, when a loan is borrowed, and called the "English Loan," the premiums for which are, "secured on the success of the grand operation."

pelled to receive the embraces of the invaders, and themselves would be forced to act as guides and waggoners, if not to enlist as soldiers, and to meet death from the bayonets of their brethren, or from the hands of an executioner.

Such has been the fate of all the countries over-run by the modern French. But alas ! their inhabitants had not the alternative which, God be praised ! we possess. They had no friends in the rear to afford them a shelter ; they had no country to indemnify them for their sacrifices for the common good ; no rallying point ; no hope, no confidence in their own government ; each family thought separately for itself, and had no choice but to throw itself on the mercy of the conqueror.

Let no man flatter himself that he can purchase security for himself or his property by submission. We, of all other people can hope for no mercy, if we are conquered. The governors of France stop at no false representations, and unworthy means of

inflaming the minds of their subjects. This they tell them is the mine that will enrich them all ; this the country which alone prevents their obtaining universal dominion ; this, they say, like Carthage, must be destroyed ; and as if these motives were not sufficient, they tax us with cruelty to our prisoners,* and excite their soldiers with the war-hoop of revenge.

After distressing the enemy, the next point for every individual to consider, is how best to assist the armed force, and join in the common defence. Whenever troops are on their march towards the enemy, every hand will surely be active in pro-

* “ Does not England refuse sustenance to 20,000
 “ Frenchmen, whom the chance of war has delivered
 “ into its hands? O pinnacle of horror! No, the Eng-
 “ lish Ministers are not human ; *we can only compare them*
 “ *to ferocious wolves, accustomed to feed on human gore,*
 “ *whose stomachs reject any other nourishment.*”

Letter of the Administrators, &c. to the Council
 of Five Hundred, 3d. Jan. 1798.

curing bread for them. There our generous countrywomen will be found to share in the laurels which their husbands, their brothers, and their friends are seeking to gather ; they will be ready to provide for their refreshment, and every necessary support on the march, and at every halt ; the farmers will assist with their teams and waggons in transporting artillery and forage ; and every one will be careful to keep the roads as clear of incumbrances as possible ; for that is a point of the utmost importance, which they who have never seen great movements are not sufficiently aware of.

And let not individuals suppose that while they are thus assisting in their country's cause, they are injuring their own fortunes. As in ordinary life, " honesty is the best policy," (and, God be praised, this country has not abandoned one ally, or broke its faith to any people) so in case of actual invasion, they who distress the enemy, and

assist their brethren, will, in fact, be taking the most effectual measures for their own preservation. But they will also meet due remuneration from Government. Proper modes are adopted, and will be made known, for ascertaining the proportion of damage every individual may have sustained from military measures. Where property has been abandoned for the sake of carrying off provisions, or helpless persons, in preference to other articles, the owner will have an opportunity of stating the case at the time, to officers appointed for the purpose, and where he shall have assisted the troops, those same officers will be bound to procure him the payment in due time. On the other hand, they will know and hold forth to public execration, those cold blooded or traitorous men, who, at such a moment, may withhold their services, or counteract the general enthusiasm : and unquestionably no live or dead stock will be paid for if it falls into the enemy's hands, unless

every possible exertion to save or destroy it, is proved to have been made by the owner.

What then has the enemy to hope for?—he expects to shake our credit to its foundation. He does not then see, that by the wisest stroke of policy that ever was attempted, it is no longer in his power. The specie of the country centres in the Bank, and its paper is now become more than ever the general medium of circulation. No avaricious farmer will hoard this ; nor even will stockholders venture to sell out of the funds, because all descriptions of men know that the Bank paper is merely a link in the chain of general credit, of which the funds are the support. He trusts, indeed, that he shall be joined by the partizans of a Hamilton Rowan, or a Thomas Muir. What their power is, the late events at the Nore plainly shewed. Then was the time for bloody Faction to rear its head ; but she fell astounded before the Genius of Britain ;—or

rather, that kind Providence, which has showered blessings on this country, unknown to any other nation, ancient or modern, interposed its protecting shield, and showed the atheistical world that England is not to be enslaved, even when a prey to civil commotions.*

It would very greatly indeed diminish the Writer's confidence in the resources of this country, if he thought the sentiments of a certain class of writers were, in any degree, those of the bulk of this nation. As an instance among the rest :

“ There are three capital *scarecrows* just set up to protect religion and social order,—Church and King, French Principles, and Radical Reform.” *Morn.*

Chron. 8 Jan. 1798.

We may be told indeed, that it is not *religion*, but the form of our ecclesiastical government, that is here ridiculed ; it should, however, be remembered, that the pretended philosophers in France set out from that point, and for the lengths they have gone, we may refer among others to the following fact, which has lately appeared in the public papers :—“ General Danican (a republican general) tells us, that a felon, who had assumed the name of Brutus, chief of a revolutionary tribunal at Rennes,

But though the Jacobin traitors will not dare to rise manfully as a body, it well behoves every man to watch, lest they should convey intelligence, or give assistance of any kind to an invading enemy. Be it remembered, that such men are parricides, and deserve no more mercy than the unnatural son who lifts his hand against his father.

That the French army, if ever it should land, will come with erroneous opinions of the great body of the people, and that it will meet with confusion and dismay at landing, in consequence of that error, is

“ said to his colleagues on Good Friday :—“ Brothers,
 “ we must put to death this day, at the same hour the
 “ counter-revolutionist Christ died, that young devotee
 “ who was lately arrested.” And this young lady was
 “ guillotined accordingly, and her corpse treated with
 “ every possible species of indecent insult, to the infinite
 “ amusement of a vast multitude of spectators.”

Contrast this with Admiral Duncan calling his crew to give public thanks to God after the victory off Camperdown ; and who shall say that our hope and our confidence stand upon no foundation ?

evident from the declaration of their rulers ;
their boastings must to every firm mind
appear ridiculous, and but for the wicked-
ness of degenerate men in our own country,
would be perfectly despicable.*

* Present effective force in Great Britain :

2 Regiments Life Guards		
1 ditto Horse Guards		
3 ditto Dragoon Guards		16,160
15 ditto Light Dragoons		
26 ditto Fencible Cavalry	-	13,104
32 ditto Infantry Regulars	-	13,540
12 Skeleton ditto, officers included,	-	2,124
18 Regiments Fencible Infantry	-	11,042
69 ditto Militia	-	45,000
252 Troops Gentlemen and Yeomanry		
Cavalry	-	15,120
856 Companies Volunteers	-	51,360
Supplementary Militia	-	60,000
Making in the whole, effective men		<u>227,450</u>

Besides 117 Companies Artillery, 10 invalid ditto,
59 Independent Companies of Invalids, and the Ma-
rines in garrison.

In Ireland is a force of nearly 120,000 effective men.

True Briton, January 15, 1798.

And a triumphant Navy !

If the Writer has, in any way, succeeded in guarding honest men against misrepresentation, and in showing them, from experience, how best they can distress the enemy, and assist in the common defence, before our own troops and armies can be supposed decisively to act, he has succeeded in his design ; he is too proud of his country, to doubt the readiness of every class of men to die for their wives, their families, their religion, their laws, and their king ; and he knows, that without making boast of a courage inherent with their birth, or of an energy displayed in every page of their history, they will strike home in the bosoms of their lawless invaders, assured, as they may hope to be, that the God of Battles is on their side.

APPENDIX.

SINCE the preceding editions of this Tract were published, the instructions of General Hoche to Colonel Tate have been made known; and the Writer feels it his duty to press the consideration of them on the minds of his countrymen; for they prove, in every line, that what he has said of the causes of the enemy's success on the Continent, of their erroneous ideas of this country, and of the certainty that no Englishman can expect mercy from them, either for his person or property, is correctly true.

The authenticity of these instructions has been affected to be called in question by some newspapers; but as they are now lying at the office of the Secretary of State, in the same state as when they were taken from Colonel Tate, and recognized by him to be authentic; it is needless to produce further evidence of a fact, which even the most violent Jacobin now scarcely dares to dispute.

General Hoche tells the Colonel, that he

must work upon the poor “ by distributing
 “ money and drink, by facilitating a rising
 “ to plunder the property of the rich, whose
 “ affluence is the natural subject of envy to
 “ the poor ; and when they have burnt or
 “ plundered country seats, farms, wood, cattle
 “ and corn, vessels and boats, on the rivers or
 “ canals, docks, and coal-yards, rope-walks,
 “ great manufactories, &c. &c.” — Then
 mark ! — “ as by these means, *a crowd of*
 “ *artizans will be thrown out of employment,*
 “ they will of course be ready to embark in
 “ any measure which holds out to them
 “ subsistence and plunder, without labour
 “ or fatigue.”

Such have been the means whereby these monsters have overturned so many of the regular governments of Europe !

The General further orders, that “ the
 “ inhabitants must be obliged to serve as
 “ guides, and any who refuse are *to be pu-*
 “ *nished on the spot.*” But this is not all.—If
 any women or children, from fear or blind
 avarice, should remain in the villages (for
 the men are otherwise disposed of by these
 instructions) they must stand sentry, like
 soldiers ; for, “ wherever the French are,
 “ if the parishes round their quarters do not

“ give instant notice of the approach of
 “ Englishmen, whether by ringing of bells
 “ or otherwise, *they are to be given up to fire*
 “ *and sword.*” To add to these horrors—
 “ Colonel Tate will encourage all deserters
 “ and *prisoners* to enlist; should such *pri-*
 “ *soners* refuse, *he will shave their heads and*
 “ *eyebrows*; and, if they are taken again in
 “ *arms, they are to be shot.*”

After such specific proof, if any one, calling himself a British subject, can harbour doubts of the horrid intentions of the enemy, no man, no not an angel from heaven, can convince him: but if his soul burn with indignation and scorn at these presumptuous threats, if his heart beat high at the recital of these wicked and bloody intentions, let him not hold back, at this unexampled crisis, but be ready with his person and his purse to maintain that Constitution, in King, Lords, and Commons, which has been the envy of past, and (with God's gracious protection) will be the pride of future ages.

March 1st, 1798.



THE END.

